

Substantive response of the Local Highway Authority to a planning consultation received under The Development Management Order.



Response provided under the delegated authority of the Director of Growth, Environment & Transport.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Planning Application Number: 26/00313/EAS

Highway Reference Number: 2026/0313/04/H

Application Address: Land West Of The Poultry Farm Desford Lane Ratby Leicester Leicestershire LE9 9BF

Application Type: EIA Screening Opinion

Description of Application: Solar Farm of up to 5MW

GENERAL DETAILS

Planning Case Officer: Sullivan Archer

Applicant: C/O Agent

County Councillor: Markfield, Desford & Thornton ED - Charles Whitford CC

Parish: Desford

Road Classification: Class C

Substantive Response provided in accordance with article 22(5) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015:

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) is in receipt of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion request in respect of a proposed Solar Farm of up to 5MW at Land West Of The Poultry Farm, Desford Lane, Ratby.

The LHA acknowledge that it is the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) decision to determine whether an EIA is required for this application.

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) advises that the Applicant may wish to engage in pre-application discussions with the LHA. For more information, please email hdc@leics.gov.uk.

In responding to the screening opinion request, the LHA has reviewed the following information:

- Desford Solar Farm Extension – EIA Screening Report (dated April 2026 and authored by LUC)

The Site would be accessed from Desford Road, a C classified road subject to the national speed limit.

Paragraph 4.45 of the EIA Report states "A *Transport Statement (TS) and outline CTMP will be submitted with the application which will assess the baseline conditions and demonstrate how access to the Site is to be achieved from the wider road network. The TS will provide detail of the access junction layout and visibility splays as well as swept path analysis for the access and egress movements and will be informed by traffic survey data if required.*".

The LHA advise that the access arrangements including the visibility splays should be informed by an automatic (not handheld radar) speed survey. Should amendments be made to an existing access, this should also be accompanied by a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and Designer's Response to any problems raised. The access should be designed in accordance with the [Leicestershire Highway Design Guide](#) (LHDG), and it is suggested a [Major Industrial Access Road](#) is proposed for the construction period.

The LHA may request that a trip generation exercise is completed for the development in order to determine the likely number of two-way trips during the AM (08:00-09:00) and PM (17:00-18:00) peak periods. The LHA would require information on peak hour, daily and weekly trip generation split by vehicle type for both the construction and operational phases. The LHA would also welcome details of the largest vehicles that will enter/ exit the site.

Whilst currently considered unlikely, the proposed development may result in the LHA asking for junction capacity assessments. It should be noted however, that the LHA will ultimately decide on the junction capacity assessments required based on a trip distribution and assignment exercise. In this respect the LHA would expect the proposed construction routing to be used to determine the assignment of vehicle trips.

An assessment of Personal Injury Collisions (PIC), should be undertaken based on data provided by Leicestershire County Council (LCC). PIC data can be obtained from our Network Data and Intelligence team by contacting RTCDData@leics.gov.uk.

The study area should be a minimum of 500m from the proposed site access and include any junctions that are subject to junction capacity assessments.

Whilst only likely for occasional maintenance, the LHA would also expect to see details regarding parking and the internal layout. The LHA would expect detail regarding parking provision for the outlined number of vehicles expected to visit the site post-construction.

Parking spaces should measure a minimum of 2.4 x 5.5 metres with an additional 0.5 metre strip where bound by a wall/ hedge/ fence etc.

A construction traffic management plan should include, as a minimum, details of the routing of construction traffic, wheel cleansing facilities, vehicle parking facilities, and a timetable for their provision, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The construction of the development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetable.

The application site includes public right of way Bridleway R49 which runs along the inside western edge of the site. Adjoining the site Byway Open to All Traffic (BOTAT) R56 runs along the outside eastern edge, and Footpath R43 runs along the outside northern edge.

The LHAs general policies on development and public rights of way are set out in the LHDG at: <https://www.leicestershirehighwaydesignguide.uk/highway-layouts-and-design/public-rights-way>.

Specific government policy on solar farms and public rights of way (PRoWs) is stated in the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) Dec. 2025 edition paragraphs 2.10.32 to 2.10.37.

In this case the issues are fewer because the application site does not bisect any public rights of way. However, the EN-3 document does note:

“Applicants are encouraged where possible to minimise the visual impacts of the development for those using existing public rights of way, considering the impacts this may have on any other visual amenities in the surrounding landscape” (para 2.10.35). The submitted EIA Screening Report does note the need to consider this, and to explicitly consider the impacts on the use PRowS during any site construction (Para. 2.10.33-4). To that end EN-3 para 2.10.37 specifically requires a Public Rights of Way Management Plan as part of any application.

In addition, it should be noted that EN-3 para 2.10.36 states *“Applicants should consider and maximise opportunities to facilitate enhancements to the public rights of way and the inclusion, through site layout and design of access, of new opportunities for the public to access and cross proposed solar development sites (whether via the adoption of new public rights of way or the creation of permissive paths), taking into account, where appropriate, the views of landowners.”*

This echoes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Dec. 2024 paragraph 105 that:

“Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users ...”.

The LHA reads these to mean that “enhancements” can be funding towards physical improvements on PRowS routes within the vicinity of a site, as well as or instead of, extending the network of routes available for the public to access the countryside.

Public Footpaths H1 and H30 run inside to the proposed development. The use and enjoyment of the Public Rights of Ways must not be significantly impacted by the proposed Solar Farm as the paths are likely to have views of the open countryside curtailed. The LHA are therefore keen to see how the Applicant proposes to mitigate this impact.

Date Received
20 April 2026

Case Officer
Ben Dutton

Reviewer
DH

Date issued
11 May 2026